

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements Project

Project Update - September 2024



Ministry of
Transportation
and Infrastructure

The Kootenay Lake Ferry Services Improvements Project is delivering a safer and more reliable ferry service for users, including improvements to the Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals which completed in summer 2022 and construction of a new electric-ready ferry to replace the MV Balfour which is reaching the end of its useful life. This Project Update provides information about construction of the new vessel.

Update

The new vessel moved into the next stage of construction over the winter. The superstructure panels are now in place along with the bridge tunnel. In the coming months, outfitting of the mechanical, electrical, and control systems and interior components will commence, along with continued work on the vehicle deck and interior spaces.

Schedule

Delivery of the new vessel has been delayed to late 2026 as a result of slower than expected progress given the unique characteristics and challenges of assembling a large vessel in a temporary shipyard. Once delivered, sea trials and crew training will commence with the vessel anticipated to enter service in summer 2027.

Budget

The project budget has increased by \$32 million since the vessel contract was awarded due to the schedule delays and given the unique nature and challenges of the project. The total project budget is now \$117 million.



Artist's rendering of the new electric-ready vessel.

Challenges

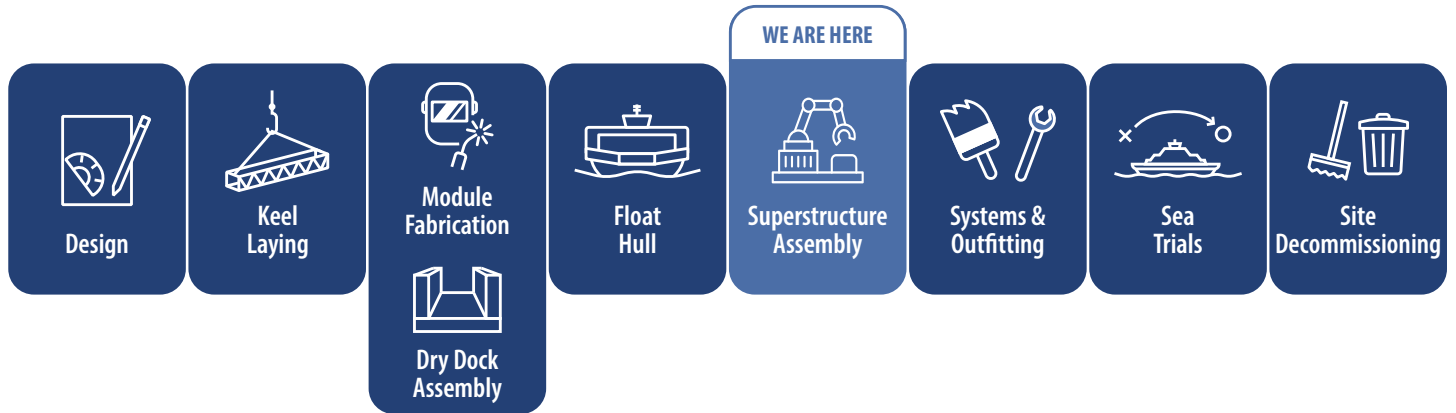
This project is unique in several ways:

- Few large inland ferries are built in BC. The last vessel of a similar size—MV Columbia, now servicing Arrow Lakes—was built for the Province ten years ago.
- As inland waterways are separated from coastal areas by dams, inland ferries have historically been built onsite at temporary lakeside shipyards near the location of operations. Interestingly, the MV Osprey 2000, which serves Kootenay Lake route, was also built lakeside in Nelson back in 2000 with the MV Columbia built lakeside on Upper Arrow Lake completing in 2014.
- Without permanent shipyard facilities, most of the steel work and all assembly must take place outdoors and are subject to schedule impacts due to weather conditions.
- Specialized trades such as marine-certified welders are difficult to recruit and retain.

Impact of Schedule Delay

Ferry service on Kootenay Lake is expected to continue without interruption. The MV Balfour was refit in 2023/24 to ensure the vessel can continue to provide service alongside MV Osprey 2000 until the new ferry is complete.

Vessel Design and Construction



New vessel construction showing tunnel bridge installation well underway.



Photo of switchboard room fully painted on new vessel.

Did you know?

In line with the Province's aim to electrify 100% of its inland ferry fleet, the new vessel will be built electric-ready and include the systems and components for electric propulsion alongside diesel engines. Once shore power is in place and the technology has been tested for reliable daily use, a full conversion will be made from diesel to electric propulsion in the future.



Photo of ongoing welding on external superstructure on new KLF vessel.

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service

The ferry service continues to operate as usual during the project. Please visit www.gov.bc.ca/kootenaylakeferry to view the schedule and current conditions and events at the terminals.

Background

In 2016 and 2018, the Province consulted with ferry users, area residents, and businesses about proposed improvements to the service, safety, and infrastructure of the Kootenay Lake Ferry.

The Province made key changes to the final project plan after considering the input received, along with technical, environmental, and financial considerations. Some of these considerations were documented in the [2018 Consideration Memo](#).

In April 2019, the Province, with funding support from the Government of Canada, announced safety and efficiency improvements to the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service.

The project involves the procurement and delivery of a new electric-ready vessel, and the completed safety and amenity improvements to both the Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals and minor dredging in the west arm of Kootenay Lake.

Collectively, these improvements will provide ferry users with a safer and more reliable ferry service as well as contribute to the Province's goal of employing electric propulsion on all inland ferries.



For more information about the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements, please visit www.gov.bc.ca/kootenaylakeferryproject